

North Carolina's Workforce Delivery System

**NCWorks Career Center Certification
Criteria**

(Updated July 2015 under WIOA)

Achieving a Culture of Quality Customer Service

NCWorks Commission

2015-2016

Introduction

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) establishes a one-stop workforce delivery system and requires there be at least one One-Stop location (NCWorks Career Center) in each local workforce investment area. These NCWorks Career Centers provide workforce development services as well as access to other programs and activities carried out by One-Stop partners identified in the WIOA. The programs identified in the WIOA are listed below, yet North Carolina recognizes that all of these programs and activities are not available in all parts of the state:

- Adult Education and Literacy
- Carl Perkins Career & Technical Education
- Community Services Block Grants
- HUD Employment and Training Programs
- Indian and Native American Program
- Job Corps
- Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program
- Migrant & Seasonal Farm Worker Program
- National Farmworker Jobs Program
- Rehabilitation Act Title I Programs
- Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs
- Unemployment Compensation Programs
- Wagner-Peyser
- WIOA Adult
- WIOA Dislocated Worker
- WIOA Youth
- YouthBuild

The NCWorks Commission works on behalf of the Governor and under the authority of the WIOA, N.C. General Statute 143B-438.10 and other applicable laws, rules, regulations and requirements to develop and oversee an effective and efficient workforce development system in North Carolina. The commission establishes minimum certification criteria to certify NCWorks Career Centers in partnership with local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). The commission developed these certification criteria to ensure a consistent level of quality service delivery throughout the workforce delivery system.

The criteria are used as standards to certify and re-certify centers. The commission understands the importance of establishing minimum standards that allow for local flexibility, while protecting the minimum service expectations of the system brand. It is the commission's vision that these criteria move the system to higher levels of quality and seamless service, as well as to foster performance accountability and continuous improvement.

The Division of Workforce Solutions within the North Carolina Department of Commerce provides staff support to the commission to carry out the commission's duty to develop an effective and efficient workforce development system. The division is also the administrator for WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and Trade Adjustment Act funding and is one of the key partners of the workforce delivery system. The division provides the administrative/policy guidance and funding resources to WDBs.

Local WDBs, under the WIOA and N.C. General Statute 143B-438.11, are policy, planning, and oversight entities responsible for organizing a comprehensive, community-wide response to the challenges of building a highly skilled workforce. In carrying out this responsibility, WDBs are responsible for assessing the needs of employers and job seekers and determining the appropriate geographic areas where NCWorks Career Centers are needed. Working in partnership with the commission, it is the local WDBs' responsibility to ensure that operational and service quality standards are being followed by certified centers and to help protect the system brand.

Integrated Services Delivery

The Division of Workforce Solutions has implemented a state-wide, integrated services delivery approach to better serve the state's citizens and businesses by responding to customer needs. This approach is described in *A Framework for Re-Engineering North Carolina's Workforce Delivery System*. It is the commission's expectation that all certified centers adhere to this approach.

Integrated services delivery focuses on customer service and is organized around services to customers, not discrete programs offered in silos. In North Carolina, it is a system in which WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program are the operational backbone of NCWorks Career Centers.

Centers implementing this system deploy integrated staffing and utilize integrated technology to generate an integrated customer pool and customer flow. **Integrated staffing** refers to center staff organized by function, not by program or employer (funding source), with the purpose of serving customers efficiently and effectively. Staff organized by function is cross-trained so that all center staff has the capacity to serve all customers and is knowledgeable about all services the center offers.

Integrated technology refers to a single, web-based system (NCWorks Online) that provides job matching services to job seekers and employers, as well as program and client management/participant tracking used by staff. It is this web-based system that helps achieve an **integrated customer pool**, where all customers (when eligibility permits) are enrolled in both the WIOA Title I Adult program and Wagner-Peyser program; and all Trade Adjustment Act customers are enrolled in the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program.

Integrated customer flow responds to customer need, not just to program requirements. Integrated customer flow refers to four major functions found at a career center that comprise customer welcome, skill development, employment services, and employer services. Regarding services offered, the term **product box** is used to describe a center's programs and services, including any number of "products" related to job placement assistance and job readiness activities, skill development services, occupational training that leads to a credential, and work-based learning.

NCWorks Career Center Criteria

Criteria have been established by the NCWorks Commission for North Carolina's career centers. Two tiers of centers have been defined. While the type of services offered at a Tier 1 and Tier 2 center may differ, the customer service requirements for both remain the same. It is required that each local workforce investment area have at least one certified Tier 1 career center.

Tier 1 NCWorks Career Centers

A Tier 1 NCWorks Career Center is a physical location, open full-time as defined by the local WDB, at which integrated services delivery is fully implemented and where services on-site include at least Trade Adjustment Act, Veterans Employment Services, Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Adult and WIOA Dislocated Worker.

To apply for certification as a Tier 1 career center and to use the NCWorks Career Center brand, the following minimum criteria must be met in the following categories:

- ✓ Location and Appearance
- ✓ Operations
- ✓ North Carolina's Integrated Web Portal – NCWorks Online
- ✓ Trained Staff
- ✓ Customer Satisfaction
- ✓ Partnerships

1. The location and appearance of the center enhance the customer experience.

- The location of the center is strategic and/or based on research and data, meaning that proximity to public transportation, customer population(s), and target industry locations were considered when deciding where to locate the center.
- The design and layout of the center is conducive to quality customer service, customer flow, and integrated service delivery.
- Hours of operation are clearly visible.
- External signage clearly identifies the location as an NCWorks Career Center.
- The facility is clean and offers an environment focused on the needs of the customer.
- Appropriate space, equipment, and internal signage are provided in support of customer flow and integrated services delivery.
- The center must meet federal requirements as stated in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

2. Operations at the center lead to quality customer service.

- The center achieves integrated staffing, an integrated customer pool, integrated customer flow, and utilizes the state's integrated technology.
 - The center has four major functions that encompass customer welcome, skill development, employment services, and employer services.
 - Center customers (when eligibility permits) are required to be enrolled in the WIOA Title I Adult and Wagner-Peyser programs; and all Trade Adjustment Act customers are enrolled in the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program.
 - The center offers services that fall in each of four categories:
 - Job placement assistance and job readiness activities
 - Skill development/improvement services – short-term, basic training
 - Occupational training that leads to a credential
 - Work-based learning, such as on-the-job training or internships
- A resource area is available that includes various local, regional, and state resources on job seeking, career development, and employability skills for customers. These areas include computers, internet, phone, and fax/copier services. In these areas, staff is present at all times so customer assistance and guidance is consistently available.
- The center has a plan/process in place to offer services, as needed, during nontraditional hours to meet customers' needs.
- There is a phone system supported by trained staff so that call-in customers can quickly and efficiently access information and services.

3. The center utilizes North Carolina's integrated web portal (NCWorks Online) which serves as the state's primary online solution providing workforce services to job seekers and employers.

- The center must use NCWorks Online to connect employers with job seekers and for WIOA and Wagner-Peyser client management.
- Up-to-date career center contact information and hours of operation are posted in NCWorks Online.

4. Staff is knowledgeable and capable of providing quality customer service.

- All center staff is trained in state-approved customer service and labor market information.
- All center staff is trained on NCWorks Online.
- All center staff is cross-trained on all the services provided by the center, as well as on federal, state and local programs and services provided by partner agencies.

5. The center utilizes the state's customer satisfaction methodology for collecting, tracking and analyzing customer feedback.

- The center must use the state's customer feedback tool on a continual basis to assess customer satisfaction and to meet customers' needs.
- The center responds to customer feedback to improve the center's service delivery.

6. Partnerships are established with community partners to enhance service delivery.

- The center has active partnerships and referral processes in place with federally-mandated partners and services, as based on demand in the center's service area.
- The center collaborates with the local community college(s) to address skills gaps and assist customers in pursuing career pathways.
- The center collaborates with career development coordinators from Local Education Agencies in its service area to address skills gaps and assist students in pursuing career pathways.

Tier 2 NCWorks Career Centers

A Tier 2 NCWorks Career Center is a physical location, open to the public at least 16 hours a week, at which paid, trained staff are available to serve customers during all hours of operation. These are locations whose primary purpose is to provide workforce services and are considered by the workforce development board to be a part of their one-stop delivery system. These locations are staffed by at least two paid, trained staff personnel who are paid by a federal workforce funding stream.

Criteria for these locations focuses on requirements in the following five categories:

- ✓ Location and Appearance
- ✓ Services
- ✓ NCWorks Online
- ✓ Trained Staff
- ✓ Relationship to NCWorks Career Centers

1. Location and Appearance

- Hours of operation are clearly visible.
- External signage clearly identifies the location as an NCWorks Career Center.
- The facility is clean and offers an environment focused on the needs of the customer.
- Appropriate space and equipment are provided:
 - Access to NCWorks Online (internet access)
 - Computers/laptops for public use
 - Phone and printer/fax/copier for public use
- The location must meet federal requirements as stated in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

2. Services (offered at a minimum)

- One-on-one interview/initial needs assessment
- Registration in NCWorks Online, Intake
- Job seeking and job readiness services (including resume assistance)
- Skills assessments
- Career counseling/coaching
- Provision of labor market information (LMI)
- Assistance with creation of career development plans (also known as Individual Employment Plans)
- Supportive services information

- Referrals to specialty services offered through other agencies (i.e., services for veterans, Native Americans, customers with disabilities.)
- Referrals to NCWorks Career Centers for additional services and occupational training

3. NCWorks Online

- The location must utilize North Carolina's integrated web portal, NCWorks Online, to connect employers with job seekers, and for WIOA and Wagner-Peyser client management.

4. Trained Staff

- The location is staffed by at least two paid, trained personnel who are paid by a federal workforce funding stream, and who provide WIOA and WP services (see list above of services offered at a minimum).
- All staff is trained in state-approved customer service and labor market information.
- All staff is trained on the use of NCWorks Online.
- All staff is cross-trained on all the services provided by the center, as well as on federal, state and local programs and services provided by partner agencies.

5. Relationship to nearest Tier 1 NCWorks Career Center

- The location must have a written strategy detailing the referral processes with the nearest Tier 1 NCWorks Career Center, which may be across local workforce area boundaries.
- (Responsibility for this relationship on the part of the Tier 1 NCWorks Career Center is also implied.)

Definitions

Integrated Services Delivery: Service delivery that focuses on customer service and is organized around services to customers, not discrete programs offered in silos. It is a system in which WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program are the operational backbone of career centers. Centers will employ integrated staffing and technology to generate an integrated customer pool and flow. This system is focused on offering value-added, staff-assisted services at career centers which are continuously promoted and provided until the customer's goal has been achieved.

Integrated Staffing: Career Center staff is organized by function, not by program or employer (funding source), with the purpose of serving customers efficiently and effectively. Staff organized by function is cross-trained so that all center staff has the capacity to serve all customers and is knowledgeable about all services the center offers. Integrated staffing is a team-based approach that results in streamlined and seamless service delivery.

Integrated Customer Pool: Career Center customers (when eligibility permits) are enrolled in both the WIOA Title I Adult program and Wagner-Peyser program during the first visit to a career center. In addition, all Trade Adjustment Act customers are also enrolled in the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program.

Integrated Customer Flow: A system that responds to customer needs, not only to program requirements. Integrated customer flow includes four major functions found within a career center that comprise customer welcome, skill development, employment services, and employer services. These customer flow functions will be fulfilled by integrated, cross-trained staff. The career center customer flow will include a first-visit, standardized initial skills assessment, easy access to a wide range of skill development services, and the opportunity to improve employment opportunities through skill upgrading, skill validation, and credentialing.

Integrated Technology: A web-based system that promotes an integrated customer pool and accommodates integrated services delivery. This system provides workforce development services to job seekers and employers, as well as efficient program and client management/participant tracking used by staff. It is in this system where all career center customers (when eligibility permits) are enrolled in both the WIOA Title I Adult program and Wagner-Peyser program; and all Trade Adjustment Act customers are enrolled in the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program.

Product Box: The list of programs and services provided by a career center. A center's product box should include any number of "products" related to job placement assistance and job readiness activities, skill development services, occupational training that leads to a credential, and work-based learning. Services should be demand-driven and value-added.